

JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

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COMMISSION ON BASIC STRATEGY FOR EVANGELISM

In 1951, a Study Commission on the Basic Strategy for Evangelism in Japan was formed, and it was particularly oriented toward the post-war changes in Japan. In keeping with the changes in social life since that time as well as to commemorate the centennial of the mission of the Church in Japan, a new study commission has been formed. At a recent study meeting, interim reports of the five groups were given.

The first group, led by Dr. Hidenobu Kuwata, president of Union Theological Seminary, Tokyo, is concerned with the theory of the mission of the church i.e. evangelism. Since Christians are a small minority in Japan the mission must be seen largely through the task of evangelism in relation to other faiths. Guiding ideas in the inquiry then must be: (1) The authority for the mission is Christ by whom we are charged and used. (2) In the midst of human history we can behold God's providence, grace, and action. (3) The contents of the mission, as the gospel of Christ, are linked to the prophetic and apostolic activity. (4) The Church's life is centered in the sermon (proclamation) and the sacraments (baptism, the Lord's Supper). (5) Problems relating to Japanese culture and the present historical situation must be considered.

It must be emphasized that "mission" is primarily the preaching of the gospel; and in Japan the particular problem is in laying an adequate

foundation for the church through renewed evangelism and by adequate discipline of the believer. Secondly, the preponderance of other faiths leads to this observation: from the standpoint of comparative religion one may believe that many faiths are advancing together. But in Japan, the distinction between Christianity and other faiths must be seen as absolute; the distinctive ideas and the imperative authority of Christianity must be affirmed.

The distinct marks of Christianity include: (1) God is personal, and this contributes to our understanding of man, especially to the problem of sin. (2) The providence of God is a tenet peculiar to Christianity. (3) Redemption or salvation is to be seen in the light of the cross, and this idea is completely different from Japanese faiths. (4) The meaning of history, as evolved through the Christian faith, is unique.

The Rev. Kikaku Shimamura heads Group II, which is studying the problem of the church in Japan. (1) Through a study of past interdenominational evangelistic efforts, the committee will seek to discover the basis for their effectiveness. They have stressed already the significance of team methods, of which there are two notable examples: Dr. E. Stanley Jones and his colleagues of the recent visit to Japan; and the annual summer program, directed by Dr. Lawrence Lacour, which in the four past years has aided in the setting up of 23 centers. (2) The problem of the church is also a human one, i.e. its work is dependent upon the pastor or layman, who is a missionary. (3) The financial problem is acute; the budgets of most churches are devoted to the support of the minister with little left for new or wider work.

Group III, studying Rapid Social Change, is focusing on two questions: (1) In what way must we understand present Japanese society, particularly the change in urban and rural life since the war? (2) In what ways or contents has life changed for particular groups -- youth, students, day-laborers, the aged, etc?

Group IV, The Method of Evangelism, is a co-operative effort -- AVACO is concerned with mass communication and audio-visual work; and Christian literature and evangelism in schools will be studied through other agencies.

Group V, Japanese culture, covers not only traditional aspects but is particularly concerned with new or re-invigorated religions, whose phenomenal growth in post-war Japan has made them Christianity's most serious rivals. For example, Soka Gakkai, begun in the early 1930's by an ex-school teacher, is primarily composed of small business owners. Its declared aims include prosperity through the attainment of national power. In the recent elections, this group elected 10 of its candidates in Tokyo alone.

NCC PLANS CONFERENCE ON EVANGELISM

The NCC of Japan will hold its third national conference at Amagi Sanso, September 16 - 18. Last year the conference studied the ecumenical movement and the church in Japan. The theme for this year will be "Evangelism" and will focus on the beginning of the second century of evangelism in Japan. Interim reports will be given by the Study Commission groups; a special lecture under group III will be given by Dr. Masao Takenaka, Doshisha University. Each of the NCC member churches will send a representative from their department of evangelism with a total of about 100 expected to attend.

FOOTNOTE ON EAST ASIA CHRISTIAN COUNCIL

(See Activity News, No. 147, June 1, 1959, page 2.) Representatives of churches which now form the East Asia Christian Conference first met at Hong Kong in the summer of 1954 through the effort of the then Board of Foreign Missions, Presbyterian Church U.S.A. (now Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations, United Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.). Interest of the representatives led to a second preparatory conference, the Asia Council on Ecumenical Mission, which met in 1955. Chairman was Bishop E. C. Sobrepena, Philippines, with Leck Tayong and Horace Ryburn (United Church of Christ, Thailand) as joint secretaries, and Darley Downs, (Japan) treasurer.

Following the Theological Education Conference in Bangkok, Feb., 1956, a meeting of representative WCC member churches and National Councils in East Asia was called to consider the meaning of the council because of some question by the WCC and IMC over its formation. With whole-hearted approval of its purpose by that meeting, a further preparatory meeting was held in Prapat, North Sumatra, Indonesia, 1957, through which all churches and councils of East Asia were invited to form the EACC. Then the Asia Council on Ecumenical Missions was disbanded, and its funds presented to the EACC.

Through its inaugural General Assembly at Kuala Lumpur, Malaya, May 14 - 24, 1959, the purpose was begun which is stated in the preamble to its constitution:

Believing that the purpose of God for the Churches in East Asia is life together in a common obedience to Him for the doing of His Will in the world, the EACC is hereby constituted as an organ of continuing cooperation among the Churches and National Christian Councils in East Asia within the framework of the wider ecumenical movement.

AVACO NEWS RELEASE:AVACO FILM ACTIVITIES INCREASE

In addition to planning the production of one evangelistic film this year, the staff of the Christian Audio Visual Center (AVACO) has been involved at an increasing pace in consultation on film production and the adapting of western films with Japanese sound.

During April and May, Japanese sound was added to four films, No Greater Power, Joseph and His Brethren, Joseph in Egypt and Ten Talents. The schedule calls for the adaptation of such films at the rate of two a month. From August lip synchronized sound will be added to the series of ten films on the Book of Acts produced in the U.S.A. by Family Films for the Southern Baptists. This will be a cooperative project between the Evangelical Lutheran Church mission and AVACO, costing approximately \$150 per film.

In addition, AVACO is helping with the editing and will produce the soundtrack on optical sound for a film produced by the Mennonite mission. This film was produced for use in the U. S., but is being adapted for evangelistic use in Japan.

A scenario for a thirty minute film for TV and other evangelistic use, dealing with the struggle of a young couple in rural Japan to find the meaning of real love, is being considered by AVACO for production in the Fall.

In addition, shooting has just been completed on a film concerning industrial evangelism work of the United Church of Christ, on which AVACO has acted as advisor. This film was produced by Missions Visualized for the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Later, AVACO will produce the soundtrack of the Japanese version which will be used to stimulate the churches to greater activity in this field.

AVACO Magazine Subscriptions Increase

Since April, when the magazine, AVACO, began to be coordinated to the church school curriculum of the National Christian Council, a net increase of one hundred ten subscriptions has been noted, bringing the total of paid subscriptions to almost a thousand.

Research Project Planned

In commemoration jointly of AVACO's tenth year of service and the anniversary of one hundred years of Protestant evangelism in Japan, the Audio Visual Activities Commission is instituting a comprehensive study of the role and rationale of audio visual aids and mass communications media in evangelism and education. Experts in the fields of theology, psychology, sociology and mass communication will participate in this study to cost approximately one thousand dollars and to culminate in a valuable resource book on which the future advance of AVACO in these fields will be based. A ten page outline of the study has been developed with the following chapter headings: 1. A General View of Audio Visual Education. 2. Theology and Audio Visual Evangelism. 3. The Methods of Modern Unified Evangelism. 4. The Present Situation in Audio Visual Evangelism. 5. The Direction of Audio Visual Evangelism and an Evaluation.

A meeting for evaluation of the preliminary work on this study will be held in August.

BRIEF NOTES:

Toyohiko Kagawa is still convalescing from a sudden illness which occurred when he was en route to an evangelistic tour in Shikoku. However, on May 23 he was moved from Luke Hospital in Takamatsu to the Kumiai Hospital in Nakano, Tokyo. A hospital fund which was collected for Dr. Kagawa amounted to nearly \$1,100. But when it was presented to him, he gave all except about \$15 to the medical fund for ministers. The national health insurance system, not yet adopted by all districts, means great hardships for ministers from those places if they become ill. Dr. Kagawa suggested that this amount might be the beginning of a system for all Protestant ministers in Japan.

On June 12, at an executive committee meeting of the NCC, Dr. Kozaki reported on Dr. Kagawa's present condition. It is now felt that Dr. Kagawa is now beyond all medical aid and that only through the concerted prayers of Christian can he recover health. Therefore, the prayers of all Christian on behalf of Dr. Kagawa before God are earnestly requested.

* * *

Departures: The Rev. Frank Cary will retire in June and will make his home in Boston with Miss Alice Cary, who is now visiting Japan. The Rev. Mr. Cary engaged in evangelistic work in Hokkaido at Matsuyama for twenty-five years. In the post-war period, he has served in the Kobe area. He is the son of the well-known Doshisha University professor of history of the Christian movement in Japan. He himself is also an historian, having recently prepared excerpts and a history from notable writings of early missionaries in Japan. This work will appear in the current Japan Christian Yearbook. Miss Alice Cary was a co-founder with Mr. & Mrs. Moran of the Yodogawa Zenrenkan ("Good Neighbor House"), Osaka, an acknowledged model for settlement work in Japan. Following twenty-five years of work there, she served as Secretary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, 1947 - 1959.

The Rev. & Mrs. E. Frank Carey and Children, United Church of Canada, will return to Canada for furlough and study. Mr. Carey has served as an evangelist, field representative for the United Canadian Church, and Associate Secretary on the Committee for Cooperation in Evangelism.

Visitors: Dr. Robert P. Beaver, since 1955 professor of Missions on the Federated Theological Faculty, Chicago, is on an extended visit to Japan. As the recipient of a Rockefeller Foundation grant he will study religions of the East, principally in Japan but also in other Asian countries. Dr. Beaver is a former missionary in China and a widely known author on missions. He was formerly Director of Missionary Research Library and Director of Research in Foreign Missions, National Council of Churches, U.S.A. (1948 - 55).

Dr. James Muilenberg, professor of Old Testament, Union Theological Seminary, New York City, will arrive in Japan on June 19 for a ten day visit. He is on a personal vacation but will lecture at Doshisha Theological Seminary, Kansei Gakuin, and before the Japanese Society of Biblical Literature at Union Theological Seminary, Tokyo.

